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NOTES ON THE NOMENCLATURE OF FOUR GENERA  
OF TROPICAL AMERICAN MAMMALS.

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It is generally admitted that stability in nomenclature can only be attained by adhering strictly to the law of priority and adopting the earliest available name for each genus and species. Some of the early writers used native names as generic designations of mammals and birds, but such terms were rejected almost without exception by certain zoölogists, who maintained that only scientific names of classical origin should be used. Illiger, and to a less extent Cuvier, were leaders in the reform against 'barbarous' names, and in carrying out their views did not hesitate to replace earlier names by others which they deemed more appropriate. As their classification of mammals and birds was very generally adopted, their nomenclature was accepted without question. At present, however, derivation is considered of much less importance than priority, and one recent writer, Liais, has even gone so far as to maintain that in the case of South American species scientific names derived from Indian names are preferable to any others. It must be admitted that no valid objections can be urged against barbarous names when such genera as *Alactaga*, *Avahi*, *Babirussa*, *Coendou*, *Indri*, *Linsanga*, and many others receive general recognition.

Some of Cuvier's and Illiger's genera have already been abandoned in favor of earlier ones, but there are still several others, as *Tatusia*, *Dicotyles*, *Cercoleptes*, and *Chrysothrix*, which are unfortunately antedated by valid names. The nine-banded armadillo was placed in a distinct group, *Tatusie*, by Cuvier in 1822,

but the name was not published in Latin form until 1827, when it appeared in Lesson's 'Manuel de Mammalogie,' p. 309. As early as 1803, Blumenbach named the same species *Tatu novemcincta*,\* and in 1809 figured it under the same designation in his 'Abbildungen Naturhistorischer Gegenstände,' No. 83. *Tatu*, having at least 24 years priority, should therefore replace *Tatusia*.

The peccaries are almost universally placed in the genus *Dicotyles* erected by Cuvier in 1817, but in 1814 Fischer proposed *Tayassu*,† a modified form of the native name, for the same group. Fischer recognized two species, *Tayassu pecari*, based on *Sus tajacu* of Linnæus, and *Tayassu patira*. He gave full generic and specific descriptions and a list of synonyms for each species. To see that *Tayassu pecari* and *T. patira* were intended as scientific and not as vernacular names, it is only necessary to notice that they are used in precisely the same way as *Sus æthiopicus*, *Tapirus americanus*, and many others on the pages immediately preceding or following the descriptions of these species. *Dicotyles* therefore becomes a synonym of *Tayassu* and necessitates a change in the family from Dicotylidæ to Tayassuidæ.

The kinkajou of tropical America is usually known as *Cercoleptes*, although it has at least 3 earlier names (*Potos* Cuvier and Geoffroy, 1795, *Kinkajou* Lacépède, 1801, and *Caudivolvulus* Dumeril, 1806), which were given as synonyms of *Cercoleptes* by Illiger when he redescribed the genus in 1811. All of these genera were based on the same species, and *Potos*‡ should be adopted as the earliest available name.

Kaup's genus *Chrysothrix*, described in 1835 for the small squirrel monkeys, is also antedated by the native name *Saimiri*, which was used as a subgenus by Voigt in 1831. § Voigt published the species as *Simia* (*Saimiri*) *sciurea*, and his *Saimiri* should have preference over the later *Chrysothrix*.

\* Handbuch der Naturgeschichte, 7te Auflage, 1803, 105-106; 10te Ausgabe, 1821, 111. The first edition of this work appeared in 1779, and the name may have been published much earlier than 1803, but I have not been able to examine any of the first six editions.

† Zoognosia, III, 1814, pp. 284-289.

‡ Méthode Mammalogique in Mag. Encyclopédique, 1ère année, II, 1795, p. 187.

§ Cuvier's Thierreich, I, 1831, p. 95.